

Report of:	Director of Legal And Governance Services – Charlotte Benjamin Executive Member for Environment, Finance and Governance - Councillor Barrie Cooper
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Submitted to:	Council – 7 July 2021
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Subject:	Appointment of Honorary Recorder of Middlesbrough
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)
Council is asked to approve the following recommendation:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The appointment of His Honour Judge Paul Watson QC as Honorary Recorder of Middlesbrough, with immediate effect and for the duration of his tenure of the post of Senior Circuit Judge at Teesside Combined Court Centre.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?
Decision	N/A	No	N/A

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan		
People	Place	Business
N/A	N/A	Creating positive perceptions of our town on a national basis by building relationships, and working with the judiciary.

Ward(s) affected
N/A

What is the purpose of this report?

- To seek a decision in regards to the appointment of an Honorary Recorder of Middlesbrough.

Why does this report require a Council decision?

2. The power to appoint an Honorary Recorder is given to full Council by way of Section 54 of the Courts Act 1971.

Report Background

3. An Honorary Recorder is an unpaid, ceremonial office created to maintain and develop close links between councils and the judiciary, and to encourage an understanding of the judicial system among the community. The functions of Honorary Recorder include attending ceremonial and civic functions, and inviting Members of the Council to attend judicial events. The Lord Chief Justice is keen for Councils to use the power available to them to make such an appointment.
4. The role of Honorary Recorder is normally reserved to Senior Circuit Judges or Resident Judges. The usual approach is for the position to be attached to a specific judge, continuing for as long as they remain the Senior Circuit or Resident Judge for the area.
5. HHJ Peter J Fox QC held the role of Honorary Recorder of Middlesbrough between 2002 and 2012, followed by HHJ Simon N Bourne-Arton QC until his retirement as Senior Circuit Judge in September 2019.
6. On 3rd February 2020 HHJ Paul Watson QC was appointed as Senior Circuit Judge, Resident Judge based at Teesside Combined Court.
7. The appointment of Honorary Recorders is in the sole gift of local authorities, however, the Lord Chief Justice's Guidelines for the appointment of Honorary Recorders requests that Councils consult the Senior Presiding Judge for England and Wales prior to making an appointment.
8. The Head of Legal Services (People) wrote to Lady Justice Thirlwall on behalf of the Council and she has confirmed that she was 'delighted to agree' to the Council's proposal to appoint HHJ Paul Watson QC to the role of Honorary Recorder for Middlesbrough.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

9. That Council approves the appointment of HHJ Paul Watson QC as Honorary Recorder of Middlesbrough with immediate effect, for the duration of his tenure of the post of Senior Circuit Judge at Teesside Combined Court Centre

Why is this being recommended?

10. To appoint an Honorary Recorder for Middlesbrough to formalise the relationship between the judiciary and the Council.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

11. The Council could decide not to appoint an Honorary Recorder, however, the town would not benefit from the positive outcomes detailed in the body of the report.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

12. Section 54 of the Courts Act 1971 gives the Council power to appoint an Honorary Recorder for Middlesbrough. The appointment does not require the approval of the Lord Chancellor or Lord Chief Justice.

Financial

13. The role of Honorary Recorder is an unpaid position, therefore there are no financial implications associated with making an appointment.

Policy Framework

14. This will not affect the policy framework.

Equality and Diversity

15. N/A

Risk

16. There are no risks associated with appointing an Honorary Recorder. Making an appointment provides an opportunity for strengthening the relationship between the judiciary and the Council.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

17. None.

Appendices

18. N/A

Background papers

19. N/A

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